

Tree Lichen Beauty *Cryphia algae* (Fabr.) (Lep. Noctuidae), breeding in Britain

The remarkable coincidence of *Cryphia algae* visiting my garden m.v. light at Dartford, Kent in the three consecutive years 2000, 2001 and 2002, one specimen in each year, in a locality rarely associated with immigrant moths from the Continent, was reported in *Ent. Rec.* **115**: 39. The moth was first reported in Britain 1859 in Cheshire, doubtless having arrived amongst imported material; records of immigrants did not commence until the 1990s. In 1990, a specimen was reported in Guernsey by Michael Chalmers-Hunt and Bernard Skinner (*Ent. Rec.* **104**: 123). In 1991, two examples were recorded on the south coast of England, to be followed by two more in 1992 and six in 1995 (Burrow, *Ent. Rec.* **108**: 153). The peak of this invasion during the 1990s occurred in 1996, thirteen specimens being seen along the south coast of England, and one inland at a garden in Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire (summarised in Skinner and Parsons, *Ent. Rec.* **111**: 153). Subsequently numbers seen annually fell and in 2000 only five specimens were recorded for the south coast, plus one at Dartford, (summarised by Skinner and Collins. *Ent. Rec.* **116**: 15). The example that I recorded at Dartford in 2002 was not the only one to be seen in north-west Kent in that year, five being noted at Barnehurst by Tony Steele at his garden m.v. light, in a large mainly residential area two and a half miles to the north (Waring, 2003. *British Wildlife* **14**: 211).

In 2003, two moths were observed at Dartford, on 27 July and 10 August, and others were seen at Barnehurst. In addition to immigrants recorded on the south-east coast of Kent, four specimens were seen in Regents Park, Central London, by Tim Freed, the first on 8 July being significantly earlier than the main invasion on the coast (Plant, 2003. *Ent. Rec.* **115**: 292).

In 2004, my garden m.v. light attracted fifteen examples of *Cryphia algae* on 27 July (1), 30 July (1), 31 July (2), 21 August (3), 4 August (1), 6 August (1), 7 August (2) and 8 August (4). This provides substantial evidence for the presence of a local breeding colony. However, of more significance is the experience of Tony Steele at Barnehurst, which he has kindly given me permission to quote. His garden light trap attracted forty-seven specimens of *C. algae* from 27 July to 22 August, with a maximum of nineteen on 29 July. Of these, the 34 examples seen up to and including 29 July were removed and not released until after 29 July, precluding duplicate sightings.

Dartford and Barnehurst, although close to the Thames Estuary, are nevertheless remote from the coastal locations visited in small numbers by immigrant *C. algae* each year for over a decade. The evidence suggests a local breeding population of the species in a restricted area of north-west Kent, probably for a period of four years. My garden, within close proximity to a large mixed woodland, suggests that the latter might be the focus of local breeding, but the Barnehurst experience indicates otherwise, and that this species' habitat comprises the gardens, wasteland and parkland of residential estates in these instances, perhaps also mixed woodland in the case of Dartford.— B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.